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**HEADLINE:** Biden, Hagel Discuss War on Terror; Gissin, al-Kidwa Talk About Mideast Peace; Black, DiGenova Debate New Wiretapping Powers

**GUESTS:** Joseph Biden, Chuck Hagel, Claudia Kennedy, George Joulwan, Raanan Gissin, **Nasser al-Kidwa**, Thomas Menino, Glenda Hood, Anthony Williams, Joseph DiGenova, Roy Black, Christopher Caldwell, Peter Beinart, Jonah Goldberg, Donna Brazile

**BYLINE:** Wolf Blitzer, David Grange, Bruce Morton, Jonathan Karl

**HIGHLIGHT:**

Senators Joseph Biden and Chuck Hagel discuss the effort to disarm Iraq and Saudi Arabia's role in the war on terror. Then, Israeli spokesman Raanan Gissin and Palestinian representative at the U.N., **Nasser al-Kidwa**, talk about the prospects of peace in the Middle East. Finally, criminal defense attorney Roy Black and former U.S. attorney Joseph DiGenova debate FBI's new wiretapping powers.

**BODY:**

WOLF BLITZER, HOST: It's noon in Washington, 9:00 a.m. here in Los Angeles, 7:00 p.m. in Jerusalem and 8:00 p.m. in Baghdad. Wherever you're watching from around the world, thanks for joining us for this special LATE EDITION, Showdown: Iraq.

We'll talk with two leading members of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the effort to disarm Iraq and Saudi Arabia's role in the war on terror in just a few minutes. But first, a CNN news alert.

(NEWSBREAK)

BLITZER: And joining us now to discuss a little bit more about this entire Saudi potential connection, the overall war on terror, and Iraq are two key members of the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in his home state of Delaware, the committee's outgoing chairman, Democrat Joseph Biden, and in Washington, D.C., the Republican Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska.

Senators, welcome back to LATE EDITION.

Senator Biden, I'll begin with you. As you read all these stories about the Saudi role, potential Saudi role, the connection, what's going on, as far as you can tell?

SEN. JOSEPH BIDEN (D), DELAWARE: What's going on is the Saudis are trying to catch up with 10, 12 years of very bad policy.

I am doubtful that there was an intentional transfer of money from the ambassador's wife to the hijackers, but it's clear, Wolf, there's a long pattern of the Saudis essentially buying off extremism in their country. They've built thousands of madrassas. They have charities that they know were not doing good things.

They've basically kept the wolf from their door, no pun intended, by sending money to these organizations as long as they stay outside of the country, and they've been incredibly lax. They're tightening up.

And so I think what this is, this is a continuing part of a saga where the Saudis don't know, have not checked, are not nearly conscientious enough in determining whether or not, quote, a "charity" is genuinely a charity or a front for, or a back door for, terrorists or terrorist-sympathizing organizations or individuals.

BLITZER: Senator Hagel, I want you to weigh in, as well. But, specifically, moving it forward a little bit, do you get the sense the Saudis right now are doing everything they can to cooperate with U.S. law enforcement, U.S. intelligence in dealing with these allegations and dealing with the overall war on terror?

SEN. CHUCK HAGEL (R), NEBRASKA: Wolf, I think they are getting there. I think as Joe has described it, he's given a good framework for what has been going on, and I do believe the Saudi government is in the process of catching up.

Now, let's remember a couple of things. One is there is no final report yet. Two, our CIA and FBI have taken issue with some of these preliminary findings. And I suspect there will be some very intriguing and exhilarating differences made here, and we will not get to that until that final report's done, as far as the conclusions.

But the bigger picture is this. Our government has been looking at the funding of these foundations over the last year, where that money goes. And I think just as Senator Biden said, it's probably doubtful that the Saudi government was intentionally allowing money to be funneled to terrorists.

But nonetheless, the Saudi government is going to have to define this in a much more critical and exact way than what we have seen in the past, and I do think that they'll get there. But they



have probably not done in the last 12 months as much as they need to do to deal with this issue.

BIDEN: Wolf, can I...

BLITZER: Senator Biden, I want you to weigh in and express, are you frustrated about the lack of, or the cooperation that the United States is getting from Saudi Arabia?

BIDEN: I think we're getting increasingly better cooperation, but if I can make an analogy for you. Right after 9/11, when we pointed out there were over 7,000 madrassas these guys funded, that is the Saudi government funded in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and they're just hate-holes, they're just places to fill with venom against America and the West, they said, "Well, OK, we're going to crack down." And they began to help us. They began to help us, they followed the money supply, et cetera.

But then they had a second stage. It's a little harder for them to tell very wealthy billionaires who aren't members of the family, who really are in fact independent of them, to tell them to stop funding these charities which are questionable. They started to do that.

In other words, they're getting gradually tighter and tighter, but they're not doing what we do in the United States of America. If we find out that you, Wolf Blazer (sic), is contributing to a charity that we think is a charity that supports terror, we will come down on you, Wolf Blazer (sic).

This government would not -- they, the government, stopped the direct funding, but they then were very hesitant to move on to Wolf Blazer (sic) and stop him from doing the funding.

We first got the answer that, "Well, you know, these are individual decisions made by wealthy individuals in our country and we're not going to control that." Well, they've gotten better and better and better. It's a little bit like they've had a bit of an epiphany here. They're beginning to see that this really does implicate them in ways that are very startling.

I would wait until the CIA report and FBI report to see whether the wife of the ambassador is directly implicated, but she may have indirectly been implicated without her own knowledge.

And this is just, they're just not nearly as tight as they should be relative to these funding mechanisms.

BLITZER: Senator Hagel, it was interesting this week at the meeting that President Bush had with the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, Putin specifically himself railed out against Saudi Arabia and its role in the whole war on terrorism. Listen to what President Putin said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

VLADIMIR PUTIN, PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA (through translator): We should not forget about those who finance terrorism. Of the 19 terrorists who committed the main attacks on September 11 against the United States, 16 are citizens of Saudi Arabia. We should not forget about that.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: I think the actual number, Senator Hagel, was 15 as opposed to 16, but certainly

the leader of al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, is a Saudi himself.

Does the United States need lecturing about Saudi Arabia from the Russian president?

HAGEL: Well, President Putin also included Pakistan in that critique, if you recall.

But I think, again, let's look at the bigger picture here. What we have cracked into here over the last year since September 11th is a universe that we've never had to explore.

We, the United States, Russians, all nations, live in an imperfect foreign relations world. There's rarely an easy choice in relationships. It's usually a choice somewhere in the middle. And we have deferred addressing the tough decisions, just like we are talking about here this morning, these issues regarding Saudi Arabia. Pakistan is another good example. Putin locked into that, as well.

Do we, the United States, consider Saudi Arabia and Pakistan allies? Yes, we do. Have they been important to us? Yes, they have. Are they especially important to us right now in our war on terrorism? Yes, they are. But do they have down sides that they bring with them to this relationship? Yes, they do.

So we are going to have to work through this in a steady way, challenge every area that needs to be challenged and probed, but keep in mind what the big picture and our long-term interests are. And that is that we win this war on terrorism. That means enhancements of our relationships, not necessarily looking the wrong way or other way when we have these tough issues to confront, which we've never confronted until the last 12 months. That's the game we're in right now, Wolf.

BLITZER: All right. And, Senator Biden, before we take a break, I want you to just wrap up this whole Saudi involvement, the Saudi aspect of this by talking a little about what the U.S. should be getting from Saudi Arabia right now as the U.S. prepares for the possibility of launching a war against Iraq.

The United States is getting cooperation militarily from the Kuwaitis, from the Qataris, from the Turks, but the Saudis right now are taking a very different stance. Is that a source of concern to you?

BIDEN: No, because they will do what we ultimately ask them to do.

The real problem here, Wolf, in my view, is a cultural one. Here you have a government that is essentially a dictatorship, essentially an oligarchy, one that is not a democracy. And the way in which all of their social programs are taking place is through personal philanthropy, in effect. And so what you have is we're trying to get them to change the way in which they culturally provide for those people in their country that are in need.

And so what happens is you have all these individual charities set up in effect -- I'm vastly exaggerating in the interest of time -- but these individual charities instead of a Department of Human Resources, for example, and you have no democratic input here.

And so we're asking them to curtail the way in which they've kept themselves in power by doling out all these little bit of, you know, dole to everyone out there. And they're finding out



now that a significant portion of those people to whom they dole these things out are not good people. They're bad people. They mean them harm, and they mean us harm.

And so this is a very serious cultural change they're trying to undertake while they continue to resist anything remotely approaching democratic institutions. And until they do, Wolf, we are going to have a problem with Saudi Arabia, and this is going to be a long time and arduous journey between us and Saudi Arabia over the next decade.

BLITZER: All right. Let's take a quick break, senators, we have a lot more to talk about, including Iraq, the potential of a U.S. war with Iraq, indeed the entire showdown Iraq.

We're also looking for your phone calls. LATE EDITION will continue right after this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Deception this time will not be tolerated.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: President Bush in Europe this week, pressing to disarm the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Welcome back to this special LATE EDITION, Showdown: Iraq.

We're talking with two key members of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the panel's chairman, the Democratic Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware and the Republican Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska.

Senator Hagel, do you believe that these upcoming inspections by these U.N. weapons inspectors can really get the job done?

HAGEL: We'll see, Wolf. The important thing is that we are now on a diplomatic high ground process and we are working that process to, in fact, reach a conclusion.

And what's important there is that we have the world community with us. We have the force of the United Nations with us. It's now up to Saddam Hussein. And what happens as we go along is really in the hands of Saddam Hussein.

So I think we'll have to wait and see, but I think this is the correct course of action that we are on. And we are preparing for a military option, if that would be required, and that's appropriate.

BLITZER: Senator Biden, are you optimistic that the inspectors can do it?

BIDEN: I'm optimistic that the job will get done one way or the other.

And I agree with Senator Hagel. If in fact, he blocks them and/or there is duplicity somehow and it's not functioning, then I think the world will support the effort to go in and take out those weapons and find them.

But it remains to be seen what action he'll take. My guess is he'll probably misjudge, as he always does. And my guess is that we're likely to be, with other willing nations, at war with

Saddam over the next -- sometime in the next six to 12 months.

But I hope that's not true. This is the single best hope we have. But if we do go now, we are so, so much better off because the leadership of the president and going through the United Nations that it drastically enhances our standing in the world, as well as our prospects in Iraq.

BLITZER: Senator Hagel, let me ask you the specific questions about these no-fly zones. As you well know, Resolution 1441, the latest U.N. Security Council resolution, says that the Iraqis should not interfere with coalition aircraft. But since the Iraqis accepted that resolution, they have indeed continued to target British and U.S. planes patrolling the no-fly zones in the north and in the south.

The U.N. secretary general, Kofi Annan, insists this is not necessarily a violation of the agreement. He says this -- he said it this past week: "I don't think the Council will say that this is in contravention of the resolution that was recently passed."

But the Pentagon spokeswoman, Victoria Clarke, has a very different point of view, reflecting, indeed, the Bush administration stance. Listen to what she says.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

VICTORIA CLARKE, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS: Two things are very, very clear. One is we're going to continue to patrol these no-fly zones. We are going to continue to protect the Iraqi people from the Saddam Hussein regime. Second thing is, we do consider it a material breach.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Do you consider -- do you agree with the administration, Senator Hagel, that the Iraqis are already in material breach of Resolution 1441?

HAGEL: The firing at American and British aircraft, Wolf, is not new. This has been going on, off and on, for the last 10 years. Is that right? No. But the fact is, this is not a new development. Is this a provocation of Saddam Hussein's government trying to interfere with our inspectors? I don't think that we can make that case.

We're going to have to resolve this issue, because you've got the American government interpreting it one way and the secretary general of the United Nations interpreting it another way.

Obviously, if there is some blatant, provocative act on the part of Saddam Hussein's government, then I think that's a clear and easy issue to deal with. We'll know what we have to do.

But in this case, since it is not a new provocation, we're going to have to find a way to resolve this. Because if this continues, then we may find in the next two or three weeks the U.N. inspection effort completely neutered and neutralized and ineffective because the United States government says, "Well, I'm sorry this is a material breach. All bets are off, and we have now one option and that is a military option." So this is going to have to get resolved within the United Nations Security Council.



BLITZER: It's clear, Senator Biden, that the Bush administration is not going to go to the U.N. Security Council specifically on these -- the interference, the Iraqis targeting the U.S. and the British warplanes in the northern and southern no-fly zones, even though they insist the Iraqis are in material breach since they accepted the latest U.N. Security Council resolution.

A lot of critics, including conservative Republicans, are wondering where else would the U.S. allow an enemy, if you will, to fire on U.S. warplanes and not respond, let's say, more massively than the U.S. has already responded?

BIDEN: Fortunately, the president doesn't listen to the Defense Department spokesperson most of the time. You say, Wolf, I think your phrase, this reflects the Bush administration's position. I would respectfully suggest nothing reflects the Bush administration position until President Bush states it.

You'll recall the Defense Department said we will not go to the United Nations. You recall the Defense Department said we will not go to the Congress. You'll recall the Defense Department said there is no option here but the use of force. Fortunately, the president makes his own decisions. He listens to other voices.

This seems to me to be the perfect ploy for Saddam Hussein. Get us in a fight with the United Nations over whether or not a 10-year pattern of firing at American planes is a material breach. Divide the United Nations, divide the allies on that issue, and then do exactly what Senator Hagel predicted would happen, render useless the investigations.

The president is too smart for this. The president will say when in fact it is materially, it's a material breach that existed before this new resolution and it continues. We should not take it lightly. We should fire on them. We should take out whatever they fire at us. We should go beyond that if we need to. But we should not all play into Saddam Hussein's hands and break up this coalition.

There will be stages here. What you have is the Defense Department doesn't want us there in the first place, Wolf. They never wanted us to go the United Nations in the first place. They think the president made a serious mistake in locking himself into this process. It's Powell against the rest of that organization. And this is just part of that same old game.

Let's listen to the president of the United States. I predict he will not blow the whole thing up over these continued 10-year pattern of firing on American aircraft.

BLITZER: So what you're saying, Senator Biden, just to be specific, not the Defense Department, what you're saying is that the secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, is on a different page than the secretary of state, Colin Powell?

BIDEN: Absolutely, and so's the vice president based on what I can see. And they're great men. They have a fundamentally different view.

They think -- I'm reading into what I know from my conversations over the last year and the actions that have occurred over the last year. They believe it was a material mistake to go to the United Nations, to get ourselves locked into this process. They know full well that if we were unilaterally tomorrow to say this is a breach, and we invade it, then we would lose all of what we

just built up.

Let's have a little bit of patience here. Nothing new has happened. Let's let the inspectors go forward. Use all the force needed to defend those no-fly efforts. Do whatever we have to do to do that. But let's not get into a semantic debate about whether is a material breach. Let's establish to the world that this guy is continuing to pursue weapons of mass destruction, generate a consensus to the world to go in and take him out.

BLITZER: All right, Senator Biden and Senator Hagel, stand by. We're going to take another quick break. We'll continue our conversation.

Also we'll be taking your phone calls. LATE EDITION will continue right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION, Showdown: Iraq. We're continuing our conversation with Delaware Democratic Senator Joseph Biden and Nebraska Republican Senator Chuck Hagel.

Senators, we have a caller from Wisconsin who has a question. Go ahead, Wisconsin.

CALLER: Hello, Senators, how are you doing today?

HAGEL: How are you?

CALLER: Can you hear me?

BIDEN: We can hear you.

BLITZER: Yes, go ahead with your question.

CALLER: OK, my question is -- it's quick -- I hear a lot that we're not allowed to -- or it's hard for us to fight Iraq, Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda at the same time, although during World War II we were able to fight two wars, basically, at the same time. Why is it so hard today?

BLITZER: What about that, Senator Hagel? You're a military veteran. Can the United States fight Iraq and continue the war on terrorism at the same time?

HAGEL: Yes, we can, if we have allies. That's a critical part of all of this, in my opinion, Wolf. The enhancement of America's relationships around the world is the key to our future success in this war against terrorism. That means enhancement of intelligence gathering and sharing with other nations, law enforcement, diplomatic, humanitarian, economic trade, as well as the military piece.

And we will do what we must do, certainly, to protect ourselves and our allies. But it's going to require coalitions of common interests, partnerships. And that is the future, I think, in the 21st century, and that's the future for America.

BLITZER: Senator Biden, as you well know, the NATO alliance expanded this week, seven new nations, former Communist countries coming into NATO. The president was in Lithuania on Saturday, and he spoke in words that presumably he believes the people in Lithuania and elsewhere would appreciate. I want you to listen to this one specific reference he made to World



War II and the current war on terrorism and a potential war with Iraq. Listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BUSH: Our alliance with freedom is being tested again, by new and terrible dangers. Like the Nazis and the Communists before them, the terrorists seek to end lives and control all life. And like the Nazis and the Communists before them, they will be opposed by free nations, and the terrorists will be defeated.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Is that appropriate, to compare these current threats against the United States to the Communist threat during the Cold War and even earlier, as well as the Nazis during World War II?

BIDEN: As I heard the president, I think what he was doing is comparing not so much the Communists and Nazis to al Qaeda, but the need, the kind of thing that was needed to defeat the Communists and Nazis was needed now, which is what Chuck Hagel talked about, cooperation of nations that love peace, nations that seek freedom.

One of the points that Senator Hagel made a moment ago -- and I completely concur with his answer to the caller, I'd just expand it slightly -- is that we have the military wherewithal to fight both al Qaeda, wherever we find it, and Iraq and more, if need be.

What we have to have, though, is, we have to have the intelligence cooperation of a vast number of other countries, in order to be able to know where to send our military. And if they're at odds with our overall policy on Iraq or anything else and refuse to cooperate with us, it makes it impossible for us to fight both wars effectively, against al Qaeda and against Iraq.

And so I think what the president was talking about -- and I agree with him -- is that there is a need to have the same kind of cohesion, the same kind of understanding of the threat and the same kind of cooperation that it took to defeat Nazi Germany and that it took to defeat the Soviet Union, in effect defeat the Soviet Union, with the Wall coming down.

BLITZER: Senator Hagel, as you know, in the war against al Qaeda, the U.S. still has not captured or killed Osama bin Laden, but it did manage to catch what U.S. officials describe as a "big fish" this week, one al Qaeda operative named Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri.

How big of a deal is this? Is this guy a big fish?

HAGEL: He is a big fish. And this, once again, points up the need for cooperation among our allies. As Joe Biden just said and reflected on some of my earlier comments, the intelligence gathering and sharing, the processing of that is the way we scoop these guys up. This is the way we really deal with this new scourge of mankind called terrorism.

And every time we can pick one of these guys up, we build on that success. We will continue to build on that success. So this was a good week for our intelligence community.

BLITZER: We're almost out of time, but Senator Biden, before we go, I have to ask you this question. We saw a lot, we heard a lot from the former Vice President Al Gore this week. He seems to be making a lot of indications that he's going to run again for the presidency. A, do you

believe he will? And, B, are you thinking about running for the presidency?

BIDEN: Yes and yes.

BLITZER: How seriously along the road are you toward making a formal announcement that you want to run?

BIDEN: Oh, I have to learn a lot more about what prospects I'd have before I would do that. I am looking at it. I am a long way away, but I think Al Gore is not and should not be. Al Gore is a significant national figure. I think if he decides to run he'll be formidable, and I think he should.

BLITZER: But you are ready to challenge him as leader of the Democratic Party and seek that presidential nomination, at least you're thinking about that very seriously?

BIDEN: If after the next several months I concluded I had a reasonable shot of doing that, I would not be reluctant to do it. I don't know that I have that reasonable shot. I paid no real attention to it in the sense of going out.

As you know, you've covered presidential politics, Wolf, you have to do this full time. I have not been doing it full time. I'm going to go take a look and decide whether or not it's viable.

But if it were, I have real disagreements with Al on some things. I would not hesitate to run because he's running. But I do think he's very formidable within our party, and obviously he's a serious fellow.

BLITZER: And what do you bring to the table? When you talk about disagreements, what do you think you would bring to the Democratic Party as leader of the party as its presidential nominee that Al Gore would not necessarily bring?

BIDEN: Well, that's a little premature to engage in that at this moment.

BLITZER: All right.

BIDEN: Thank you.

(LAUGHTER)

BLITZER: But it's always fun to do it in any case.

BIDEN: Thank you very much.

BLITZER: Senator Hagel, you're looking at becoming the majority in the Senate. You're going to be -- what are you going to be doing now in your role? Are you going to be chairman of the committee?

HAGEL: Well, Senator Lugar is going to replace Joe Biden. And fortunately for this country, I think Senators Lugar and Biden are two of the preeminent thinkers and most experienced foreign policy people we have in government. They work closely together.

I then will be the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. I look forward to working with the new chairman and the outgoing chairman over the next couple of years, working with the administration. We have many great challenges ahead of us.



And I would say that as far as my family's concerned, we already have a president, and that's Bush. His name is Bush, and I expect him to run again. And if Joe decides to run, I think he'd be a formidable candidate.

(LAUGHTER)

BIDEN: That's a long way away.

BLITZER: Senator Biden and Senator Hagel, we'll be watching all of this in the next weeks and months to come, and we'll have a little bit of fun on this program, as well. Always good to have both of you on the show.

BIDEN: Thank you very much, Wolf.

HAGEL: Thank you.

BLITZER: Thank you very much. Thanks to both of you.

Just ahead, U.S. troops prepare for a possible second war in the Persian Gulf. What will they face this time around? We'll get some unique insight into the U.S. plan from the former NATO supreme allied commander, General George Joulwan, the retired U.S. Army lieutenant general, Claudia Kennedy, and the retired U.S. Army brigadier general, David Grange.

It's all coming up on LATE EDITION.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BUSH: My expectation is, is that we can do this peacefully if Saddam Hussein disarms. That's my expectation. But Mr. Saddam Hussein has got a decision to make.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: President Bush speaking during a visit with European allies this past week.

Welcome back to LATE EDITION, Showdown: Iraq.

If the crisis with Saddam Hussein does end in war, what are the challenges of a U.S.-led military campaign this time around? Joining us now with some perspective, three very distinguished military veterans.

In Washington, the former supreme allied commander of NATO, retired U.S. Army General George Joulwan. Also in Washington, retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Claudia Kennedy. She's the Army's first female three-star general and is the author of an important book about that experience, entitled "Generally Speaking." And joining us from Oakbrook, Illinois, is retired U.S. Army Ranger and Brigadier General David Grange. He's also a CNN military analyst.

Generals, good to have all three of you on LATE EDITION.

General Joulwan, you're a retired four-star general so I'll begin with you.

(LAUGHTER)

The U.S. military, by most accounts, seems to be pretty much ready to go. It's deployed in

the region. Probably going to take a few more weeks, but what's your sense right now as far as readiness level of the U.S. military if the president should give that order to go to war?

GEN. GEORGE JOULWAN (RET.), FORMER NATO ALLIED SUPREME COMMANDER: I think we're fairly well set, Wolf. We've deployed command and control headquarters, troops, the prepositioned stocks are ready. Our air bases are up. The predeployment of both air, land and sea forces are there. I think it's very important here not to get locked into option A or option B because I'm not sure the president has made that decision yet. But all options are still on the table, the military are working all those options. But quite a bit, quite an impressive bit of deployment and much different than we were in 1990.

BLITZER: And I want to flesh some of those differences out in a moment.

But, General Kennedy, as you look at that readiness, how long can a military remain in that kind of high-ready capability without losing some of its edge?

LT. GEN. CLAUDIA KENNEDY (RET.), U.S. ARMY: Well, that's always something we think about, and our commanders both at the strategic level and at the tactical level have a very good sense of how to cycle the soldiers through periods of intense training and then less intense activity.

BLITZER: So basically what, is this a matter of weeks, months? How long can they continue at sort of this hair-trigger level?

KENNEDY: Well, this army is the best prepared and the most ready we've ever had. And so, part of the reason for that is the leadership that they get. That leadership is very sensitive to the need to keep people in a high-energy state. And so we're able to do this as long as it takes. We're in here for the long haul.

BLITZER: General Grange, if the readiness level is eventually, once the president gives the order, supposed to be, let's say, at a 10, where do you estimate the U.S. military is right now?

BRIG. GEN. DAVID GRANGE (RET.), CNN MILITARY ANALYST: Yes, I don't think any military is ever at a 10. There's always things as a commander that you want to do that you haven't had time to do. But it's true, it's the best trained army in the world. It has the most experience of any army in the world since the first Desert war all the way up through all the operations ongoing until now. So it's ready.

There's some things that need to be tweaked. There's some more stocks that need to be replenished. But it's in good shape and this is what soldiers, Marines live for is actually this type of training.

BLITZER: Airmen and sailors, as well, I'm sure you meant to include them in your analysis, General Grange.

GRANGE: Absolutely.

BLITZER: Let's get right to our caller from Georgia. Go ahead, Georgia.

CALLER: Yes, thank you very much, Wolf. I'd like to ask your outstanding panel, in the event we attack Iraq, how many ground troops will be needed and how long do you think it'll



take to achieve victory?

BLITZER: Tough but important question, General Joulwan.

JOULWAN: Again, I hate to give a number. I think the 70,000 to 80,000 would seem, I think is something we should think about. But remember what I said. The president has not yet made a decision.

And the president will make the decision, not any of his Cabinet. The president will make his decision. And based on that option, whether it's going to be quick with SOF and Air Force, that's option A, all the way to a large ground force.

I would not underestimate the number that's going to be required now. I think it's very important to keep all those options on the table. If regime change comes into this and that means going into Baghdad, that's going to require another set of force structure. I can tell you the military is planning for all of that. I think they're looking at simultaneity, which they're not just going to come in from one axis, from one country. This is the sort of pressure that I think Saddam Hussein needs to feel.

So, the numbers involved here can vary from a very small number with SOF and Air Force, up to a larger number if that political decision is to go in and take Baghdad.

BLITZER: General Kennedy, I'm sure you've noticed, as a lot of our viewers have noticed because I get tons of e-mail on this, that many of the retired generals perhaps are considered more dovish as far as going to war with Iraq, specifically Secretary of State Colin Powell, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, our own General Wesley Clark, a former NATO supreme allied commander, as opposed to some of the political leaders, some of them who never served in the military.

What's your take on this?

KENNEDY: Well, my sense of this, Wolf, is that retired general officers, as is true of all ranks of soldiers who have retired, we have a perspective on this that is built on experience. And General Powell and General Clark, as well as any number of others, understand the price of war and we understand what it costs.

And so we want to make sure that when this country goes to war that we're very serious about it, not only about the military operation but about the sustained, political effort, the sustained economic development that would be devoted to this region upon completion of military operations.

BLITZER: All right. Generals, we're going to take a quick break. We're only getting started.

We have a lot more analysis to do with our outstanding panel of retired generals. They'll also be taking more of your phone calls. This special LATE EDITION, Showdown: Iraq, will be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION, Showdown: Iraq. We're talking about the military challenges of a possible new war with Iraq with the former NATO supreme allied

commander, retired General George Joulwan, the retired U.S. Army lieutenant general, Claudia Kennedy, and the retired U.S. Army brigadier general and CNN military analyst, David Grange.

General Grange, I want you to listen to what the secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, told CNN's Bob Novak this past weekend, over these past few days about the next war, if there is a next war, against Iraq. Listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD RUMSFELD, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: Saddam Hussein's forces are considerably weaker today than they were then, and our forces are considerably stronger.

The fact remains that the existence of weapons of mass destruction changed the equation. And so, the very reason why it's important for him to disarm also changes the circumstance quite substantially. And one has to be sensitive to those risks.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Talk, General Grange, about those risks. Assuming the Iraqis militarily are weaker, the United States militarily is stronger, there is this whole wild card of weapons of mass destruction.

GRANGE: Well, that's correct. I mean, tank on tank, aircraft on aircraft, there's obviously no match, and I think Saddam and his regime knows that.

The threat would be a special Republican Guard fighting in the cities, as an example, or use of WMD, in this case a chemical attack on an advancing U.S. force or coalition force or starting, let's say, some type of biological warfare on his own people, like the Shi'a in the south, to contaminate an avenue of approach moving north.

Things like that he could use, and I think he's the kind of person that would do it, and likely if we go to war again.

BLITZER: That sounds, General Joulwan, like a huge potential challenge facing the U.S.

JOULWAN: Of course it is, and not just the U.S. I think it's also a great challenge for our European and NATO allies who are very close to Iraq, Turkey in particular, very important for our ally Israel and other nations in the region.

So I truly think that the weapons of mass destruction, by the way, have been around for 20-plus years in Iraq are something that needs to be contended with. I wouldn't panic over it, but we need to address it.

And, by the way, I'm a little bit concerned about being a doveish retired general here...

(LAUGHTER)

... but I think it's something that we really need to be concerned with but equally with our allies.

BLITZER: I didn't say you were a doveish general.

(LAUGHTER)



I called General Powell and General Clarke doveish. We'll talk about that in a moment. Generals, all of you stand by. I'm not categorizing any of you.

We're going to take another quick break. Coming up in the next hour of LATE EDITION, we'll get much more insight from our distinguished military panel. Then we'll move on, talk about the war on terror. We'll have three big-city mayors. They'll be weighing in on the state of homeland security in the United States.

All that, much more, including Israeli and Palestinian officials. LATE EDITION will be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION. We'll continue our military roundtable in just a moment, including more phone calls for our three generals, but first, here's CNN's Carol Lin in Atlanta with a news alert.

(NEWSBREAK)

BLITZER: We're getting some insight into the obstacles and challenges of a possible new war with Iraq from the former NATO supreme allied commander, retired General George Joulwan, retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Claudia Kennedy, and retired U.S. Army Brigadier General and CNN military analyst David Grange.

General Kennedy, if you're taking a look at the differences of the U.S. and the Iraqi militaries a dozen years ago as opposed today, you add in this ingredient that the Iraqis, if pressed against the corner, Saddam Hussein might unleash weapons of mass destruction. That certainly scares a lot of Americans right now who are worried about their loved ones who may serving in the U.S. military.

KENNEDY: Yes, well, certainly people are always very proud of the people who serve who are from their families who serve in our American military, and always a bit concerned especially in times of active operations like these.

One of the differences is that, compared to the first Gulf War, is that our munitions are far more precise than they were a dozen years ago. We have a more capable army. It will be a different size and scope of a war, although I completely agree with General Joulwan that there's a lot of range in the planning right now.

And I think that one would have to assess that the Iraqi military lacks the same robustness that it even bordered on before. And, frankly, we saw what happened once active operations got under way.

BLITZER: Do you see, General Grange, perhaps on a much bigger scale, but the same model that was used to effectively liberate Afghanistan from the Taliban and al Qaeda a year ago, that same model, bringing in special operations forces early on, then working with these -- the air power, do you see that effectively getting the job done, at least to start with, in Iraq?

GRANGE: I think it'll be more simultaneous use of forces this time, both general-purpose and special-operating forces. And I think it may start off with a limited size, but very quickly

it'll, I think, produce overwhelming force, in case things change, once you start to fight, which always appears to be the case, and then have enough force in place, when you go into the consolidation phase, after you remove the regime, that you can control Iraq itself for the transition.

BLITZER: General Joulwan, we saw a historic expansion of NATO this past week. Seven additional countries from Eastern Europe, the former Soviet bloc, now full-scale members of NATO, something that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago. And the Russians simply stood by the side. The president then went to see President Putin the next day and got a pretty warm reception over there, as well.

What role as an organization, if any, should NATO have if there is in fact another war against Iraq?

JOULWAN: Well, I think, first of all, the Prague summit was a great success. And when linked to the congressional resolution here, the U.N. resolution, and now a very strong resolution coming out of Prague, it's very significant. And I think politically that's important for Saddam Hussein to feel that pressure, so he doesn't miscalculate.

I think the allies can, and NATO in particular, can help in many different ways: basing, overflight rights, logistics, as well as on the ground. Remember, there are 400 Romanians now in Afghanistan, with U.S. forces. I think you will see several of our NATO nations joining us, if and when we get involved in Iraq.

And remember also that the Germans and Dutch will take over the international security force in Afghanistan. There is a willingness, and I think that was demonstrated.

This cohesion, this mutual trust and confidence that we felt for so many years in NATO is there again today. NATO is every bit as essential today as it was in the past. I hope we realize that. And they will be very important, particularly Turkey as a NATO member, if and when we go into Iraq.

BLITZER: All right. Let's take a caller from Kansas. Kansas, go ahead, please.

CALLER: Yes. My question is, after Iraq, what other nations we take on, especially nations where the terrorism evolved, namely, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia?

BLITZER: General Kennedy, your background, at least in part, is in intelligence. What happens after Iraq, assuming there is a war with Iraq?

KENNEDY: Well, one of the most important activities in the aftermath of military operations in Iraq is to do something about making sure that that country does not fragment, that politically they're able to find a way to effect a regime change that has some kind of transformation from the current dictatorship to something approaching democracy, and to get back on their feet economically.

I think the focus ought to be on Iraq and making sure that these people, who are basically well-educated, well-schooled, have plenty of background to be able to take on their own self-governance, that they're able to do that.



Now, that requires a longer-term commitment by the United States and all of our allies than just the period covered by military operations.

BLITZER: We know, General Grange, the U.S. military has done some extensive planning for the possibility of urban warfare in Baghdad, other major cities of Iraq. We, in fact, have some 3-D animation of some of the things that they've been looking at. But a lot of Americans remember Mogadishu, some other unpleasant experiences.

Is the special operations forces, are these capabilities there for the U.S. military, if they have to go into a huge city with millions of people, like Baghdad?

GRANGE: A lot of training effort has gone into fighting in cities, especially in the last 10 years. Some units are very good at it. Others are getting better all the time. It's a priority of training for Marine and Army units and aircraft operating in city areas, like helicopters.

So, the military's much better than it used to be. It's difficult. It's something we don't want to get involved in, but you probably have to at times. And I think the military's going to be ready for it.

BLITZER: General Joulwan, why is it so hard for the U.S. military in Afghanistan and along the border, let's say, between Afghanistan and Pakistan, to find Osama bin Laden?

Everyone assumes he is now alive, and everyone seems to assume that he's along that border someplace. Why can't the U.S. military and its coalition partners there find him?

JOULWAN: Well, it's always difficult to find one individual, but -- and I hope we learned the lesson from Afghanistan, if and when we go to Iraq. The point of military operations is to impose your will on the enemy.

I don't think we did that adequately in Afghanistan. We had opportunities at Tora Bora and Anaconda to close with (ph) and destroy the enemy. We didn't do that effectively, in my opinion. And therefore, many of the al Qaeda escaped.

We are now making adjustments in Afghanistan. We cannot make that mistake in Iraq. There is never a free operation in terms of casualty-free operations.

But what we should focus on is what is the mission, the clarity of that mission, and get on with it. There will be a price to pay, but we cannot make the mistakes we made in Afghanistan, we made in Lebanon, we made in Bosnia and the Balkans. We have to learn. And we must learn that in Iraq if and when we commit to force.

BLITZER: General Kennedy...

JOULWAN: And I think it's very important.

BLITZER: Go ahead, General Kennedy, I want you to have the last word. A lot of our viewers looking at the seasons changing, the weather factor, if in fact the president gives the order to go to war against Iraq -- December, January, February and March.

Is the weather an issue that the president and the military command has to consider?

KENNEDY: Absolutely, Wolf. We think about the weather in every single military

operation, whether we're in the summer or we're in the winter. And remember that our special operation troops, as well as our light infantry, train, at least half of them, train under severe winter conditions, and we're able to go in and do that.

The other part of this is that when we've been developing weapons in the last 10 or 12 years, one of the considerations has to do not only with night operations but winter, severe cold weather operations.

BLITZER: Now, there's a bigger problem, though -- and let me have the last word, General Grange -- as far as dust is concerned, in that part of the world, desert warfare and the heat if it gets to March, April. Is that a deadline, in effect, for going to war?

GRANGE: There's never a deadline. It's a consideration. It's a factor. There'll be wearing on parts of machinery, combat equipment and helicopters, but it will not be a show-stopper. It's tougher to operate, but I believe the forces are capable of doing that.

BLITZER: Three retired U.S. generals joining us. Thanks to all three of you, General Joulwan, General Kennedy, General Grange. Always a pleasure having you on this program.

When we return, a new round of violence in the Middle East. Is there any chance of renewed efforts for peace? We'll talk with the Palestinian representative to the United Nations, Nasser al-Kidwa, and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's aide, Raanan Gissin. They'll join me live when LATE EDITION continues.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BUSH: We're going to continue to work toward peace in the Middle East. Two states living side by side in peace is the vision.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: President Bush commenting on the latest cycle of violence in the Middle East. Eleven Israelis were killed and dozens more were injured in a Palestinian suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem on Thursday. And a 13-year-old Palestinian boy and a British United Nations worker were killed and another Palestinian man was injured in a subsequent Israeli crackdown in the West Bank and Gaza.

Joining us now from Jerusalem is the spokesman for the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Raanan Gissin, and in New York, the Palestinian representative to the United Nations, Nasser al-Kidwa.

Gentlemen, welcome back to LATE EDITION.

I want to get to all of those issues in a moment, but Raanan Gissin, we just had a lengthy discussion about Iraq.

What is the position of the Israeli government? If the U.S. goes to war against Iraq and the Iraqis were to attack Israel once again as they did a dozen years ago, what would Israel do?

RAANAN GISSIN, ISRAELI SPOKESMAN: Well, Israel's a peace-seeking nation. We're



not looking for any wars with anyone, neither with the Palestinians nor with the Iraqis.

But, of course, if we are attacked -- and I see that as not as the most reasonable scenario, because I believe that certain precautions and certain measures will be taken so that this will not happen. But if it does, I can assure you that Israel will know how to defend its citizens like any other democracy. And that's our prime responsibility.

But I don't believe that we will reach that kind of a scenario. I think the planning of the war, as we learn it from the United States, if there will be a war, and hopefully there won't be, but if there will be one, that issue of attack against Israel will be taken care in advance.

BLITZER: Well, let me press you on that because you obviously are vague, perhaps deliberately so. What does that mean, it would be taken care of in advance, so that the Iraqis, for example, don't launch Scuds at Israeli targets?

GISSIN: Well, I believe that it's become common knowledge, both in your press in the States as well as here, in the cooperation that we have with the United States. And the United States, if it is going to go to a war against Iraq, is going to neutralize in advance the launch capabilities of the Iraqis with regard to weapons that they may have, whether those are weapons of mass destruction or nonconventional weapons.

But at any rate, you can rest assured that we have taken all the defensive measures in order to protect our citizens. We also have offensive capabilities, and I think that the Iraqis will think twice before they decide ever to use these weapons.

I would say that a major threat to the countries of the Middle East and other countries in the world lies more so with the spread of terrorist activity rather than with the launching of these missiles.

BLITZER: All right. Let me bring Ambassador al-Kidwa in.

What do you sense will be the reaction of the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, elsewhere, if the U.S. finds itself at war, militarily speaking, against Iraq?

**NASSER AL-KIDWA**, PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO THE U.N.: Well, we believe that the region does not need another war. This is -- this would be a very dangerous development. I hope that it's not going to take place. And we believe that Security Council Resolution 1441 provides for a peaceful solution through the inspection regime.

Unfortunately, we also believe that Israel is pushing, Israel and its friends, I must say, is pushing for a war. And we fear irresponsible behavior on the part of the Israeli authorities, including, for instance, waging even broader attacks against the Palestinian people and maybe getting into additional illegal schemes against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

BLITZER: Raanan Gissin, two accusations Ambassador al-Kidwa just made against your government. Let's handle both of them, if you could respond briefly.

Are you encouraging the United States to go to war against Iraq, your government?

GISSIN: No, we're not, and we're not involved in any conduct of the war. We support the United States and President Bush efforts to eradicate terrorism because it's a threat to all

democracies around the world, but we have no intention of going to war, and we're not involved in this war.

All I can say that right now, for the past six weeks, we've been facing a wave of unprecedented terrorist activity from all the Palestinian terrorist groups, and we had to exercise our right of self-defense. And this would seem that the ones who are trying to instigate an escalation is not Israel but rather the Palestinian terrorist groups, with, I must say regrettably, the support of the Palestinian Authority.

BLITZER: All right. Let's let Ambassador al-Kidwa respond to that charge from Raanan Gissin.

Go ahead, Ambassador.

AL-KIDWA: Well, I believe that the term "self-defense" is very misleading. Let's recall that Israel exists in the occupied territory as an occupying power. It has been there for more than 35 years, waging the most oppressive campaign against the Palestinian people and actually waging even colonialism, trying to expand beyond its border and trying to annex even parts of the occupied territories.

So the legal aspect and the political meaning of the situation has always to be borne in mind. So, the situation is completely different. Again, Israel is an occupying power. And the only issue that it has to do is to end its occupation, as the United States by the way repeatedly called for, and allow the existence of a Palestinian state -- a real one, with full sovereignty over its land and its people.

BLITZER: Raanan Gissin, I'll give you a chance briefly to respond, but we have to take a commercial break. Go ahead and respond briefly, and then we'll come right back. Go ahead, Raanan.

GISSIN: Well, I think this is never been said before here on CNN, but the ones who deny Israel's right for self-defense also deny my birth right. This is not occupied territory, disputed territories, because I have birth rights on that land, is equal and if not more than Mr. Al-Kidwa.

I recognize his rights to the land. He never recognized my inherent, historical rights to the land which is my ancestral homeland.

BLITZER: And you're referring -- hold on one second. You're referring, Raanan Gissin, specifically to the West Bank, right?

GISSIN: No, I'm saying that the ones who deny my right of self-defense, it derives from denial of my inherent birth rights to the land that I live on. I'm not an occupying power.

AL-KIDWA: You are an occupying power.

GISSIN: I lived on that land for 4,000 years. My forefathers -- no, I'm not. This is disputed territory between two people.

BLITZER: Ambassador Al-Kidwa, go ahead very quickly, go ahead and respond.

AL-KIDWA: There are 37 Security Council resolutions on the situation on occupied territory



that is the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Twenty-seven of those resolutions define Israel as occupying power. There is consensus, international consensus on this fact.

For Mr. Gissin to come here and deny that there is occupation actually is negating the possibility of any peaceful solution between the two sides.

BLITZER: All right.

AL-KIDWA: This is exactly the crux of the problem. They want to annex this land. They want to expand. That is the crux of the problem.

BLITZER: All right, we're going to take a quick break. We have much more to talk about.

We're going to continue our conversation with Raanan Gissin and Nasser Al-Kidwa. LATE EDITION will be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLITZER: Welcome back to LATE EDITION. We're talking about the crisis in the Middle East with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's spokesman, Raanan Gissin, and Nasser al-Kidwa, the Palestinian representative to the United Nations.

Raanan Gissin, there's been a lot of interest, today, yesterday, this weekend, involving Saudi Arabia and the war on terror, allegations, suggestions that the Saudis may have at least indirectly played some role in funding some of those September 11th hijackers.

As far as your government is concerned, is Saudi Arabia funding terrorist actions against Israel?

GISSIN: Look, I don't know if they're funding directly, but there's no doubt that there has been money, Saudi money, involved in supporting families of the terrorist groups, families of suicide and homicide bombers.

There's an overall atmosphere, today, which is very permissive to this kind of suicide and homicide bombing, which is part and parcel of, I would say, that radical element of Islam that wants to see a solution to the situation by eradicating Israel, by eradicating Western democracies. And that's a very ominous sign.

And the fact that there is money funneled into it and incitement which goes unabated are the main causes for the continuation and the spread of this ominous phenomena of suicide and homicide bombing, which we had, unfortunately, the experience in the past two years of suffering from it more than any other nation in the world.

BLITZER: Ambassador al-Kidwa, as far as you know, are Saudi funds going to groups the U.S. State Department considers to be terrorist groups, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, in particular?

AL-KIDWA: Well, I don't think so, actually. Even Mr. Gissin is speaking about Saudi money going to families. And families and charities are one thing; terrorist activities are another thing altogether.

But again, this is the same Israeli pattern, trying to draw some kind of suspicion about Arab positions in general, whether it is Saudi Arabia or any other Arab country, speaking about

incitement, while he himself is saying publicly on the CNN that no occupation, thus negating the existence and the national rights of the Palestinian people. This is the utmost instigation that should be condemned and, frankly, should be ended (ph), so that the two sides can indeed reach a solution.

BLITZER: Raanan Gissin, as you know, the United Nations representatives in the West Bank are very angry right now that Israeli forces apparently killed a U.N. worker on the West Bank over the past couple of days. Tell us what the position of your government is, what happened in that incident.

GISSIN: We regret very much the loss of any innocent civilians, and we are the ones who supported UNRA (ph) and U.N. workers in the territory, as much as we can.

But I think we've got to set the record straight. For the past 30 years, all those refugee camps were used, misused and abused by the Palestinian terrorist groups who used these refugee camps as launching and staging ground for attacks against Israel. They did it in Jordan, they did it in Lebanon, they now do it in the territories, and the world was silent.

You know, talking about U.N. resolutions, I haven't seen one resolution in the 55 years that the U.N. exists that supports the state of Israel. I've seen over 100 resolutions that condemn Israel.

We have a debate now in Israel, because we have elections. And it's a legitimate debate about how to carve a road to peace. And what is the debate in the Palestinian Authority today, among the Palestinian groups? It's whether they should kill Israelis and Jews only in the territories or in the rest of the country.

BLITZER: Well, I'm going to move on, but there is a 1947 U.N. partition resolution, which called for the establishment of a Palestinian and a Jewish state, but that was in 1947.

GISSIN: That's the one resolution.

BLITZER: Ambassador al-Kidwa, we all saw that Jerusalem bus bombing this week. The Israeli government says the Palestinian Authority, led by Yasser Arafat, could control these suicide bombers, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, if he really wanted to.

Is there more he should be doing? Can he be doing more? Because clearly not only the Israeli government but the U.S. government is obviously condemning the Palestinian Authority for not doing enough.

AL-KIDWA: Well, unfortunately we can't do more in the circumstances, thanks to the Israeli policies and Israeli actions, including the destruction of the security capabilities of the Palestinian Authority.

We need different political atmosphere. We need to provide the Palestinian people with hope, with political horizons, so the Palestinian Authority is enabled to take the necessary actions in this regard.

So, we have no doubt in our mind about the appropriate way to proceed, but let me go back about and say something about this U.N. official who was killed by the Israeli army. The Israeli



army killed him, prevented the needed saving actions to be taken. And unfortunately, they lied about that, as usual, as happened in the past repeatedly.

That proves, to my mind, the pattern being articulated or being committed by the Israeli forces against the Palestinian people in general. The Israeli soldiers, unfortunately, are trigger happy to say the least, and I'm afraid there is even a culture that was created through the upper echelon of the army that encouraged this kind of completely irresponsible behavior, if not criminal behavior, including the commission of war crimes.

BLITZER: All right. What about that, Raanan Gissin?

GISSIN: Well, you know, we have to admit when we make mistakes. I haven't heard Mr. al-Kidwa admit that the Palestinians have made any mistakes or, for example, what kind of painful compromises are they willing to make for peace? We show that we're willing to make painful compromises, and we started with a process which was dashed by the Palestinian Authority and their leader.

What kind of painful compromises today are the Arabs and the Palestinians willing to make for peace? Maybe that's the kind of question that Mr. al-Kidwa has to address himself to.

AL-KIDWA: Very good point. May I try to answer that?

Actually, we are ready to reiterate our acceptance for Israel within 1967 border and to live in peace side by side. I hope that Mr. Gissin is able to say that we accept the end of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory that started in 1967 and accept the existence of a Palestinian state with sovereignty so that we can live side by side.

This is the solution and there is, again, international consensus in favor of this resolution. What is needed is to have clear Israeli position in favor of this resolution, and then the situation could dramatically change.

BLITZER: Go ahead, Raanan Gissin. We're almost out of time.

GISSIN: Israel is committed to peace. And the prime minister of Israeli's government can lead to peace, despite all the allegations and all the demonization that spreads today in the Arab world.

But one thing must be understood. First, there has to be an end to that awful incitement which sends young school children to blow themselves up in buses and discotheques and kill other, indiscriminately, other school children, other Israelis.

Without the stoppage of incitement, the two-state solution that we want so much will not materialize. And I think it's the responsibility of Nasser al-Kidwa and the Palestinian leadership to seriously look into this matter of what the incitement does to the next generation.

BLITZER: All right. We gave Raanan Gissin the first word.

AL-KIDWA: I'll accept...

BLITZER: Ambassador al-Kidwa, you'll have the last word. Go ahead, respond to the most recent point that Raanan Gissin just made.

AL-KIDWA: I think we both have to exercise some additional efforts to end this miserable situation, this tragedy which is taking place. We have to try even harder, and the Israeli side has to try. Terrorism or terrorist acts has to end, but also war crimes committed by the Israeli army have to come to an end.

So, we desperately need to end this situation, and let's hope that we can still, nevertheless, work together toward that end.

BLITZER: All right. Nasser al-Kidwa and Raanan Gissin, a good debate, a good discussion today. Thanks to both of you for joining us on LATE EDITION.

AL-KIDWA: Thank you.

BLITZER: We'll have both of you back, probably in the not-too- distant future.

And just ahead, as the holiday travel season begins here in the United States, a new U.S. Department of Homeland Security is beginning to take shape. But is it enough to keep Americans safe? We'll ask Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, Orlando Mayor Glenda Hood and Washington, D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams.

LATE EDITION will be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TOM RIDGE, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY: This is the first time we'll have an agency that can consolidate that information and work with the private sector to protect and harden these targets.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: The U.S. homeland security director, Tom Ridge, speaking to CNN the day after the Senate overwhelmingly approved the creation of a new Department of Homeland Security. President Bush expected in the coming days to sign that bill into law.

Welcome back to LATE EDITION.

We turn now to three mayors who are on the front lines in the war against terrorism: In Boston, Mayor Thomas Menino. He's also the president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. In Orlando, the Florida -- Orlando, Florida, that is, Mayor Glenda Hood. She's the chairperson of the Florida Domestic Security Advisory Panel. And in Washington, D.C., Mayor Anthony Williams. He's a member of the Homeland Security Advisory Council.

Mayors, thanks so much for joining us.

Mayor Menino, let me begin with you. Now that there's about to be this formal Department of Homeland Security, do you think the people in Boston are going to be any safer as a result of that?

MAYOR THOMAS MENINO, PRES., U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS: I think the Homeland Security Department was long overdue. The mayors called for it right after 9/11. You